



New documents on political and social issues

March 2009

WOMEN HISTORY MONTH

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MILESTONES IN U.S. WOMEN'S HISTORY

International Information Program, U.S. Department of State, February 25, 2009

<http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2009/February/20080325190828liameruoy0.3090631.html?CP.rss=true>

The article covers people and events that moved women's rights forward.

PLACES WHERE WOMEN MADE HISTORY

National Park Service, 2009

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/pwwmh/>

The itinerary focuses on 75 historic places in New York and Massachusetts associated with the varied aspects women's history. It shows the accomplishments of many American women who made outstanding contributions to education, government, medicine, the arts, commerce, women's suffrage and the early civil rights movement.

U.S. CELEBRATES WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLD EVERY MARCH

International Information Program, U.S. Department of State, February 24, 2009

<http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2009/February/20090224164038xlrennef0.6375086.html>

The author and environmentalist Rachel Carson is the inspiration for the 2009 National Women's History Month theme, Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet. Carson's 1962 book, *Silent Spring*, focused the world's attention on the harm to human health and the environment caused by the indiscriminate use of pesticides.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: MARCH 2009: FACTS FOR FEATURES

U.S. Bureau of Census, January 2009

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/pdf/cb09ff-03.pdf>

Starting with the number of females, 154.7 million, as of October 1, 2008, the report shows earnings, education, and other topics related to women.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: WOMEN TAKING THE LEAD TO SAVE OUR PLANET

Library of Congress, March 2009

<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/>

The website offers exhibits & collections, images, profiles and more related to women's history.

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AMERICA'S YOUNGEST OUTCASTS: STATE REPORT CARD ON CHILD HOMELESSNESS.

National Center of Family Homelessness, March 2009

http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/pdf/rc_full_report.pdf

Without a voice, more than 1.5 million of the nation's children go to sleep without a home each year. These children also endure a lack of safety, comfort, privacy, reassuring routines, adequate health care, uninterrupted schooling, sustaining relationships, and a sense of community. These factors combine to create a life-altering experience that inflicts profound and lasting scars. The report describes the status of homeless children in four areas: extent of child homelessness; child well-being; structural risk factors; and state-by-state policy and planning efforts.

AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION SURVEY 2008

Trinity College, March 2009

<http://www.americanreligionsurvey-arls.org/>

The American population self-identifies as predominantly Christian but Americans are slowly becoming less Christian. The U. S. population continues to show signs of becoming less religious, with one out of every five Americans failing to indicate a religious identity in 2008.

ARTISTS IN A YEAR OF RECESSION: IMPACT ON JOBS IN 2008.

National Endowment for the Arts, March 2009

<http://arts.endow.gov/research/Notes/97.pdf>

Unemployment rates are up among working artists and the artist workforce has contracted, according to the research. It examines how the economic slowdown has affected the nation's working artists. The study looks at artist employment patterns during two spikes in the current recession, the fourth quarters of 2007 and 2008. This downturn reflects larger economic declines: a Commerce Department report last week noted a 6.2 percent decrease in the gross domestic product in the last quarter of 2008.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS: 2008

Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 11, 2009

<http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2008.htm>

According to Current Population Survey estimates for 2008, 75.3 million American workers age 16 and over were paid at hourly rates, representing 58.2 percent of all wage and salary workers. On July 24, 2008, the Federal minimum wage increased to \$6.55 per hour from \$5.85 per hour. Data in the report reflect the average number of workers earning the prevailing Federal minimum wage or less for the year (those who earned \$5.85 or less from January 2008 through July 2008 and those who earned \$6.55 or less from August 2008 through the end of the year).

ENGLISH LITERACY OF FOREIGN-BORN ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES: 2003

National Center for Education Statistics, March 17, 2009

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009034.pdf>

The brief draws on data from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) to explore the English literacy of foreign-born adults living in households in the United States. It presents the English literacy scores of foreign-born adults age 16 and older by race/ethnicity, age of arrival in the United States, years spent in the United States, highest level of educational attainment, and language spoken before starting school. Scores are reported on three literacy scales: prose, document, and quantitative. Findings indicate that English literacy scores of foreign-born adults varied across a variety of background characteristics.

HEALTH CARE, HEALTH INSURANCE, AND THE RELATIVE INCOME OF THE ELDERLY AND NONELDERLY

Center for Retirement Research, Boston College, March 2009

http://crr.bc.edu/images/stories/Working_Papers/wp_2009-10.pdf

Most American families are covered by an insurance plan that pays for some or all of the health care they consume. Only a comparatively small percentage of families pay for the full cost of insurance out of their cash incomes. As health care has claimed a growing share of consumption, the percentage of care that is financed out of household incomes has declined. Because health care consumption is more important for some groups in the population than others, the growth in spending and changes in the payment system for

medical care have reduced the value of standard income measures for assessing relative incomes across age groups and across the income distribution. More than a seventh of total personal consumption now consists of health care that is purchased with government insurance and employer contributions to employee health plans. Standard income measures imply that households with an aged household head have significantly lower average and median incomes than households with a head who is less than 55.

HISPANICS BECOME MORE PREVALENT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

U.S. Bureau of Census, March 4, 2009

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school.html>

Hispanic students comprised 12 percent of full-time college students, both undergraduate and graduate students, in 2007, up from 10 percent in 2006, according to U.S. Census Bureau tables. Hispanics comprise 15 percent of the nation's total population.

MINI-DIGEST OF EDUCATION STATISTICS 2008

National Center for Education Statistics, March 2009

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009021.pdf>

The publication is a pocket-sized compilation of statistical information covering the broad field of American education from kindergarten through graduate school. The statistical highlights are excerpts from the Digest of Education of Statistics, 2008.

ONE IN 31: THE LONG REACH OF AMERICAN CORRECTIONS

Pew Center on the States, March 2009

http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing_and_corrections/PSPP_1in31_report_FINAL_WEB_2-27-09.pdf

Explosive growth in the number of people on probation or parole has propelled the population of the American corrections system to more than 7.3 million, or 1 in every 31 U.S. adults, according to the report. The vast majority of these offenders live in the community, yet new data in the report finds that nearly 90 percent of state corrections dollars are spent on prisons. The report examines the scale and cost of prison, jail, probation and parole in each of the 50 states, and provides a blueprint for states to cut both crime and spending by reallocating prison expenses to fund stronger supervision of the large number of offenders in the community.

THE OTHER COLLEGE: RETENTION AND COMPLETION RATES AMONG TWO-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Center for American Progress, February 2009

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/02/two_year_colleges.html

Two-year colleges have long been the stepchildren of the higher education family of institutions, the so-called "other college," despite the fact that they are the main contact with higher education for a large proportion of young people. In 2005, two-year college enrollment was almost 40 percent of total college enrollment.

A RISING SHARE: HISPANICS AND FEDERAL CRIME

The Pew Hispanic Center, February 18, 2009

<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=104>

Sharp growth in illegal immigration and increased enforcement of immigration laws have altered the ethnic composition of offenders sentenced in federal courts. In 2007, Latinos accounted for 40% of all sentenced federal offenders-more than triple their share (13%) of the total U.S. adult population.

STATE OF AMERICAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, 2009: A NATIONAL STUDY OF VALUES AND BELIEFS

Center for American Progress, March 11, 2009

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/03/pdf/political_ideology.pdf

The growing progressive movement in the United States finds itself at a historic and propitious crossroads. With large Democratic majorities in both chambers of Congress and an ambitious new president who campaigned and won election on promises of bold changes--both serving a citizenry that is deeply

frustrated with the status quo and desperate for new leadership at all levels of our society--the potential for true progressive governance is greater than at any point in decades.

THE STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA 2009

Pew Research Center's Project on Excellence in Journalism, March 2009

<http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2009/index.htm>

The study provides both aggregated and original research on the eight major sectors of media--newspapers, online, network, cable, local and network TV; magazines; radio and ethnic. It also includes special reports on the Year in the News, lessons from the 2008 election, an analysis of citizen media sites and more.

THE 2008 BROWN CENTER REPORT ON AMERICAN EDUCATION: HOW WELL ARE AMERICAN STUDENTS LEARNING?

The Brookings Institution, February 25, 2009

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2009/0225_education_loveless/0225_education_loveless.pdf

A new report from the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution finds serious flaws in a prominent international test and concludes that the test should not be used as a benchmark for state assessments.

UNEMPLOYMENT ROSE SHARPLY AMONG LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN 2008

The Pew Hispanic Center, February 22, 2009

<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=102>

The unemployment rate for foreign-born Hispanics increased from 5.1% to 8.0%, or by 2.9 percentage points, from the fourth quarter of 2007 to the fourth quarter of 2008. During this same time period, the unemployment rate for all persons in the labor market increased from 4.6% to 6.6%, or by 2.0 percentage points.

All previous web alerts can be found at:
<http://france.usembassy.gov/politics-alert.html>